

Summary

Development and Organization of Military Judiciary within the Czechoslovak Legions in Russia

During more than 6 years of its existence, the Czechoslovak Legions in Russia underwent fundamental organizational changes, which were related to the transformation of a small volunteer unit into an army of many thousands of an independent state. In examining the organizational development of the legionary military justice, it is necessary to take into account the military-political circumstances in which the Czechoslovak army operated in Russia.

In the period from the establishment of the legions in 1914 to 1917, the legions were an organizational part of the Russian Tsarist army and all organizational structure, including the administration of justice, was carried out by the relevant Russian authorities under Russian law.

In the second half of 1917, despite the disintegration of the Russian armed forces, there was a massive development of the Czechoslovak legions, but without a corresponding development of the judicial service. A key prerequisite for building their own military justice was the exclusion of Russian legions from the Russian army and their inclusion in the autonomous Czechoslovak army in France. At the same time, a modified French disciplinary code was adopted, which was the first independent legal regulation of the legionary justice.

Increased criminality, combined with insecurity and the lengthy transport of legions across Russia and Siberia, had necessitated the establishment of a new judicial service organization. Thus, elected echelon courts were established for individual train transports. After the outbreak of fighting with the Bolsheviks in May 1918, 4 Czechoslovak field courts were established, whose jurisdiction was to judge attacks against the security and property of the Czechoslovak army, regardless of the nationality of the perpetrator.

The completely autonomous era of the Russian legions ends with the establishment of an independent state and the reforms of the Minister of Military M. R. Štefánik. These completed the organizational structure of the legionary military judiciary, which was three-tiered and consisted of 23 regimental courts, 4 divisional courts and a corps court.

In some parameters, such as the composition of judicial senates, the organization of the legionary military judiciary differed from the regular Czechoslovak military courts in the

republic, yet it was concluded to keep the original elements, because they worked satisfactorily and the army was used to them.

Due to the fact that there is a lack of modern professional publications on the topic of legionary military justice, the work draws mainly from sources from the Czech archives, legionary orders and memories of direct participants.

Keywords

World War I and the Russian Civil War (1914–1920), Czechoslovak Legions in Russia, Military Criminal Justice.